



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

## NEWS RELEASE

EASTERN IDAHO NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE COMPLEX  
4425 Burley Drive, Suite A • Chubbuck, Idaho 83302  
(208) 237-6615 • FAX (208) 237-8213

Contact: Dick Munoz, (208) 237-6615

#01-10

June 4, 2001

### U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE TO HOST DEDICATION OF BLOOMINGTON PROJECT AT BEAR LAKE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

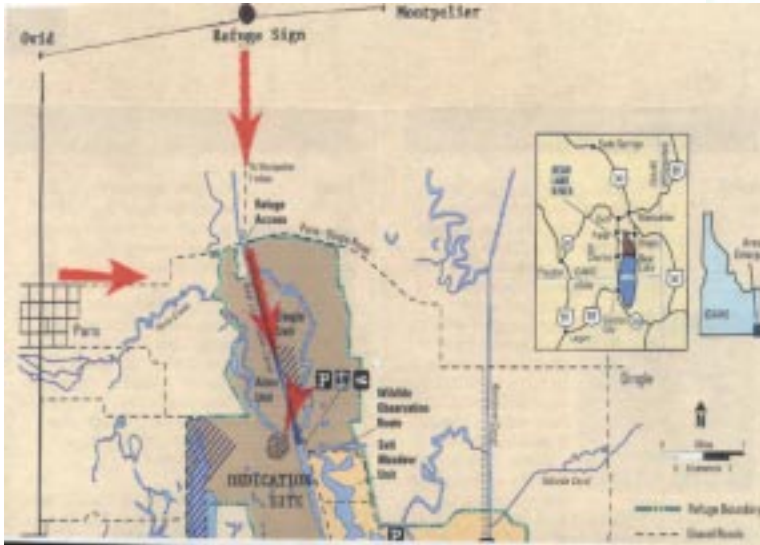
The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will host a dedication ceremony in honor of the completion of the "Bloomington Project" at Bear Lake National Wildlife Refuge near Montpelier, Idaho. The ceremony will be held on June 7, 2001, at 11:00 a.m. at the project site.

The Bloomington Project, a significant habitat restoration effort on the Bear Lake Refuge, was designed to enhance wetland quality for the benefit of a multitude of species on the refuge, including trumpeter swans, Canada geese, white-faced ibis, and mallard, canvasback and redhead ducks. A coalition of various private, state and Federal entities combined resources to construct 5 miles of levees and 4 major water control structures on nearly 2,000 acres.

The Bear Lake National Wildlife Refuge, located in southeastern Idaho near Montpelier, encompasses 18,000 acres of the old Dingle Marsh. The marsh was significantly altered by the diversion of the Bear River for irrigation purposes. The diversion created two conditions that seriously compromised productivity of the refuge wetlands: carp overproduction and increased silt loads. These factors contributed to habitat degradation, including the virtual elimination of aquatic plants that are necessary for waterbird survival. To reestablish productive marsh habitat, managers recognized that a serious restoration effort on this portion of the Bear Lake Refuge would be necessary.

A North American Waterfowl Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant of \$467,897 provided the impetus for the project in 1998. Those funds were compounded by matching contributions from the various partners on the project, including PacifiCorp, Ducks Unlimited, Intermountain Joint Venture, North American Wetlands Conservation Council, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The value of PacifiCorp's match toward the Bloomington Project was about \$1,020,000, and the North American Wetlands Conservation Council and Intermountain Joint Venture also contributed initial project funding and in-kind services. Ducks Unlimited provided essential engineering support and construction oversight, and the Idaho Department of Fish and Game was instrumental in the funding and staffing of the carp eradication effort. Dick Munoz, Southeast Idaho Refuge Complex Project Leader, spoke to the value of combined resources on efforts such as the Bloomington Project, noting, "The Bloomington Project vision was monumental. We knew the benefits would one day far outweigh the costs, but realized fully that the venture would be cost-prohibitive for the refuge to attempt alone. The only realistic way to attempt this task was to form a solid partnership of organizations with the common goal of restoring the habitat to benefit the species. Without our partners, this project never would have been accomplished."

— more —



The Service is hopeful that within two years, the Bloomington Project will have increased the wetland productivity on the refuge, providing critical habitat for waterbird nesting, feeding, and reproduction. Refuge Manager Dick Sjostrom noted, "We are already seeing an immediate response to the work that has been completed. A similar project east of the Outlet Canal, the Rainbow Unit, has demonstrated that aquatic vegetation response is dramatic when carp are excluded. Within two years, we are hopeful that the Bloomington Unit will be equally productive. Increased food means increased waterbird production, which is one of our primary goals on the refuge."

Representatives of the partnership at the dedication ceremony will include U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Deputy Regional Director, Rowan Gould; Ducks Unlimited Senior Vice President, Mike Stengl; Intermountain Joint Venture Management Board Chairman, William Molini; Idaho Department of Fish and Game Regional Supervisor, Dexter Pitman; and PacifiCorp Managing Director of Hydro Resources, Randy Landolt.

For more information about the Bloomington Project, directions to the dedication ceremony, or other information about National Wildlife Refuges in Idaho, please contact Dick Munoz at 208-237-6615.

## FWS

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 94-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System which encompasses 535 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 70 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resource offices and 78 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces Federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Aid program that distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

For more information about the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, visit our home page at <http://www.fws.gov>  
This news release and others are posted on the Snake River Basin Office website: <http://www.fws.gov/r1srbo>